

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) spoke on the House Floor today in opposition to Republicans' budget reconciliation bill, which targets federal employees at a time when federal employees are already under a two-year pay freeze. Below are his remarks:

"I want to thank my friend, Mr. Van Hollen, for the work he's done. I want to rise in opposition to this focus on federal employees.

"First of all, federal employees have contributed \$75 billion over the last two years towards helping us reduce the deficit – \$75 billion. No other working American has been asked to do that. You treat federal employees in this House as second-class working people. That's wrong. This is a 5% tax increase on federal employees. Nobody else. Nobody else do we ask. The richest people in America, we don't ask them to help solve this deficit problem. But federal employees, yes, a \$75 billion contribution, and you don't blink an eye because it's easy – because we demagogue about government and, by association, we demagogue about 'bureaucrats' used as an epithet.

"As Mr. Van Hollen said, they protect our food, try to find cures to cancer, protect us against terrorism, guard our borders. That's what we're talking about, and we treat them as second-class citizens. That's wrong. It's wrong for our country. It's wrong for the American people and it's wrong for us as an institution representing the government of this country.

"Ladies and gentlemen, reject this. I'm going to talk about other aspects of this so-called reconciliation bill at a future date, but I ask you on this basis alone, federal employees – I will tell you, as one who represents a large number of them – are ready to participate in helping to bring down this deficit and meet this crisis. But do not ask them to do it alone. That's what Mr. Van Hollen says about oil companies, big corporation loopholes, and the wealthiest of Americans. Asking more from those who have less and less from those who have more. That is just not good policy. Let us not pursue it, and I yield back the balance of my time."